

For the Health of the Baby
PSI Promotes PMTCT services through *Cuoc Song Moi* Campaign

Tran Thi Tuyet was delighted when she learned she was pregnant five months ago. Tran and her husband had recently moved from their village to Ha Noi, Vietnam, where she found work as a tailor. Tran visits the local commune health center every month for prenatal check ups; this is her first pregnancy and she wants to ensure she delivers a healthy baby.

An outreach worker in her community recently visited Tran to celebrate the news of her pregnancy, and offered guidance on how to ensure a healthy delivery. The outreach worker also serves as a midwife at the local commune health center. The outreach worker shared information about HIV with Tran, and how voluntary counseling and testing services were available at the health center.

Tran had felt healthy, and believed no one in her family had a risk history that might put her at risk for HIV infection. She also believed that if a pregnant woman was HIV positive, then the child would most certainly be infected. Tran asked the outreach worker, "I'm not at risk for HIV, and why should I bother anyway. There is no cure for HIV." The outreach worker informed her that precautions were available that could prevent the transmission of HIV from a pregnant woman to her baby, if an HIV infection was discovered early enough in the pregnancy.

Population Services International (PSI), with support from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), provides communication support to promote 'early HIV testing' as part of promoting uptake of prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) services in ANC sites. PSI's works closely with provincial government partners and community based organizations to leverage Vietnam's social communications infrastructure and existing public health systems to promote voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) among pregnant women across seven PEPFAR priority provinces.

PSI uses research to identify important barriers to HIV testing among pregnant women, delivers messages through a branded campaign, "*Cuoc Song Moi*" (New Horizons), to emphasize early testing at PMTCT centers for the health of the baby. *Cuoc Song Moi* messages are delivered through a mix of communication channels, including outdoor (billboards, bus stops), print (newspapers, magazines), online (websites for pregnant women). Outreach workers from community-based organizations help promote PMTCT messages using interactive communication tools and targeted IEC materials. These are distributed to pregnant women and service providers at the site and community level.

The outreach worker left Tran with a set of materials in case she had any further questions. During a follow up visit about a month later, the outreach worker asked Tran whether she had given any more thought to getting tested for HIV. Tran said, "I want to do everything I can to make sure my child is born healthy, and getting an HIV test is just like any other precaution I should take." Tran tested negative for HIV, and she is confident that her child will be born healthy. Her experience at the PMTCT center has given her a new peace of mind.

PSI's PMTCT communication activities are part of a comprehensive response to HIV prevention in high prevalence provinces in Vietnam. PSI's program includes promotion of HIV related products (male and female condoms, water-based lubricants) and services (voluntary counseling and HIV testing) and targeted behavior change communication messages among most at-risk population groups, including sex workers and their male clients, injecting drug users, and men who have sex with men.